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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1009
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INFO RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2869
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1171
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0626
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1273
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2000
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4061
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 3327
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 8230
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 005032

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TH](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: UNSYG UPDATE: SURAKIART'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER

REF: A. BANGKOK 004742 (SURAKIART ON HIS UNSYG CANDIDACY)

[1](#)B. BANGKOK 004803 (CHINESE ON NORTH KOREA AND THE
UNSYG CANDIDATE)

Classified By: Political Counselor Susan M. Sutton. Reason 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart Sathirathai's campaign to succeed Kofi Annan is on track, according to his campaign manager Suriya Chindawongse, and his team is hoping for a conclusion to the race in September/October. Surakiart is "not worried about Asian support for his candidacy" and is counting on ASEAN members to lobby UNSC states for him. According to Suriya, Surakiart's pitch revolves around his suitability to drive UN management reform and his status as a "bridge builder who can be trusted by all parties." Nonetheless, Suriya emphasized that UNSYG Surakiart would be good for the United States. End Summary.

CAMPAIGN ON TRACK

[1](#)2. (C) In an August 17 meeting with poloffs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Counselor Suriya Chindawongsae outlined the status of Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Surakiart's campaign to be the next UN Secretary General. Suriya, who serves as Surakiart's campaign manager, said that the DPM and his team are hoping that the race for UNSYG is wrapped up by September/October. According to Suriya--who served for three years in New York at the UN--some member states are hoping that the next UNSYG can overlap with Koffi Annan for a short period, to provide a smooth transition.

[1](#)3. (C) Suriya characterized Surakiart's campaign as on track; "we are not worried about Asian support for his candidacy." Following the July 24 UNSC straw poll (ref A) the DPM met with the ASEAN foreign ministers and ARF dialogue partners in Kuala Lumpur, where he received "lots of encouragement." Surakiart's current strategy is to use ASEAN members to lobby UNSC member states for him. ASEAN support for Surakiart is solid, as evinced by Singapore's demarche of P-5 members in New York explaining that there will be no Singaporean candidate. Suriya, who refused to discuss specific competitors for the post, nonetheless characterized Surakiart's competition as having "started late." Suriya also

expressed surprise at the strong showing by the Indian candidate in the July strawpoll.

SURAKIART'S PITCH

14. (C) Expanding on the information in ref A, Suriya outlined Surakiart's three-point pitch to UNSC member states. The first item on Surakiart's agenda would be UN management reform. As a UN "outsider" with broad experience in politics, private business, academia and foreign policy, Surakiart would be more effective than other Asian candidates in accomplishing this mission. Second, Surakiart would leverage his (self-described) role as a "bridge builder who can be trusted by all parties" to expand and enhance international peace and security efforts. Finally, Surakiart's nationality is a major bonus. Thailand is "not too big and not too small," and is not seen as a stalking horse for any other member states. When asked how this pitch was received by UNSC members, Suriya admitted that the first question that most asked was "how many slots will we get in the secretariat?"

15. (C) According to Suriya, Surakiart has also drawn up a list of other areas he would like to tackle as UNSYG, including an expanded role for the UN in providing disaster relief and preventing pandemics, increasing UN cooperation regional groups such as ASEAN, and boosting public-private partnerships.

OUR SPECIAL FRIEND

16. (C) Suriya made a point of emphasizing that, while

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Thailand's historic role as a friend to the world is a major selling point for Surakiart, the RTG's natural affinity for the United States should be a key consideration for Washington. People should not be worried that Thailand and Surakiart are "too close to China."

SUPPORT ON THE HOME FRONT

17. (C) Suriya dismissed domestic criticism of Surakiart's campaign (ref A) as evidence of political bias in the English-language Thai press. The antipathy of retired foreign policy professionals towards the Thaksin government is driving criticism of Surakiart and does not reflect national opinion.

BOYCE